



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
And
Scoping Meeting Notification**

DATE: August 16, 2004

PROJECT TITLE: "NorthLake Specific Plan," Phase One Implementation
Conditional Use Permit No. 98-047
Specific Plan Amendment No. 98-047
Amendment to Development Agreement No. 87-172
Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 51852

CEQA LEAD AGENCY: County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

PROJECT APPLICANT: LB/L – SunCal NorthLake, LLC
21900 Burbank Boulevard, Suite 114
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

The County of Los Angeles will be the lead agency and will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the project identified above. In compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA *Guidelines*, the County of Los Angeles is sending this Notice of Preparation to responsible agencies, interested parties and federal agencies which may be involved in approving or permitting the project, and to trustee agencies responsible for natural resources affected by the project. Within 30 days after receiving the Notice of Preparation, each agency is requested to provide the County of Los Angeles with specific details about the scope and content of the environmental information to be contained in the SEIR related to that agency's area of statutory responsibility.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation is to solicit the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the SEIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The proposed project site is located in the Castaic area, in an unincorporated portion of northwest Los Angeles County. The project involves implementation of an approximate 669-acre portion (Phase One) of the previously adopted Northlake Specific Plan (Specific Plan) area. The 1,330-acre Specific Plan area is located northerly of Lake Hughes Road, between Interstate 5 (I-5) to the west and the Castaic Lake State Recreation Area (SRA) to the east. The proposed project involves the southern half of the Specific Plan area, exclusive of the most southern tip.

Geographically, the site is comprised of the southern reach of Grasshopper Canyon, a major northwest-southeast trending feature, and the ridges along either side of the canyon. Primary access to the project site is provided from I-5 via Parker Road or Lake Hughes Road, which in turn lead to Ridge Route Road. Ridge Route Road runs along the western edge of the entire Specific Plan area, including the project site. Two power line easements run parallel to the canyon, one on each ridge.

In 1992, the County of Los Angeles adopted the Specific Plan, a 1,330-acre mixed-use planned community providing for 3,623 residential dwelling units, 13 acres of commercial, 50 acres of industrial, community recreational amenities (including a golf course), supporting infrastructure and public services, including school, park, and fire station sites. The initial Specific Plan land use plan identifies thirty-one conceptual Planning Areas with the commercial and industrial uses concentrated along the southwestern portion of the Specific Plan area and varied densities of residential throughout the remainder. The Specific Plan identifies areas for recreation and community facilities throughout the plan area with natural open space concentrated along the ridgelines. A Development Agreement, adopted in conjunction with the Specific Plan, outlines performance timelines related to the provision and implementation of project components.

Table 1 summarizes Specific Plan land uses approved in 1992 and provides a comparison and use distribution of those uses relative to the current and future phases under the proposed project.

TABLE 1 – LAND USE SUMMARY

Land Use	Planning Area	1992 ADOPTED NORTHLAKE SPECIFIC PLAN (acres)	PROPOSED AMENDED SPECIFIC PLAN	
			Phase One (Current Phase) (acres)	Future Phase (acres)
Commercial	1, 9	13.2	4.7	8.5
Industrial	2-8	50.1	11.8	38.3
Residential: Multi-Family ¹	10-13, 15	95.5	32.2	63.3
Residential: Single-Family ¹	16-23, 26-31	504.8	307.9	196.9
Open Space/Recreation	13-16	643.3	287.8	355.5
School/Park Facilities	24-25	23.1	24.8	(1.7) ²
TOTAL		1330.0	669.2	660.8
<p>1 Includes 166.9 acres of golf course, club house and tennis/swimming facility. The acreage calculation incorporates 166.9 acres formerly reserved for golf course and related facilities as residential use under the amended plan.</p> <p>2 The NorthLake Specific Plan initially combined recreational uses associated with a proposed golf course within the residential land use calculations, and combined schools and parks as a single land use category. Under the current Phase One proposal, recreational amenities will be provided through a network of independent neighborhood park facilities, resulting in a shift of the characterization of some recreational land uses from “residential” to “park”. Further, these park facilities are independent of anticipated school facilities. By regulation, 23.1 acres remains reserved for combined school/park facilities at a future phase and will be reconciled through adjusted land uses calculations during the future planning process which address reallocation of the 166.9 acres of golf course area between residential, open space/recreation and school/park facilities. Until that time, and because the current proposal includes more park area than was initially defined in the Specific Plan, the remainder area for school/park facilities appears as a negative acreage.</p>				

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project will be the first phase of development toward implementation of the previously adopted NorthLake Specific Plan. The proposed Phase One project involves subdivision of a 669.2-acre area to create 1331 new lots (see Table 2), site and landscape planning approvals for the area, cut/fill of earth, remedial and project grading, and installation of roads and infrastructure within a 690.6-acre rough grade footprint. The rough grade footprint includes approximately 407 acres within the Specific Plan boundary and approximately 284 acres off-site but contiguous to the Specific Plan area. In addition,

several existing utility service lines (for gas, water, electricity, and telecommunications) and an oil pipeline will be relocated and fuel modification buffer areas installed. This additional area of fuel modification involves approximately 65 acres outside of the rough grade footprint.

Project Land Uses

The proposed Phase One Implementation provides for a total of 1,732 dwelling units, including 1,260 single-family units on approximately 198.2 acres and 472 multi-family units on 26.4 acres. The land uses are summarized in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 – PHASE ONE SUMMARY

Use	Number (units or sq. ft.)	Area (acres)	Number of Lots	VTTM 51852 Lot No. Reference
Single-Family Residential	1,260 SF units	198.2	1,260	Lots 1 – 1260
Multiple-Family Residential	472 MF units	26.4	12	Lots 1261 - 1272
Commercial	approx. 102,350 sq. ft.	4.7	1	Lot 1273
Industrial	approx. 179,900 sq. ft.	11.8	4	Lots 1274 - 1277
Parks/Recreation	19 pocket parks and 1 recreation center	28.3	20	Lots 1278 - 1297
Open Space		284.3	50	Lots 1298 - 1347
Subtotal	1,732 dwelling units 282,250 sq. ft. bldg. area (non residential)	553.7	1,347	
Others (Roads, etc)		115.5		
TOTAL	1,732 dwelling units 282,250 sq. ft. bldg.area (non residential)	669.2	1,347	

Project Site Access

The proposed project will be primarily accessed from Ridge Route Road. Regional access will be provided by I-5 via the Lake Hughes and Parker Roads exits. The proposed development provides for the establishment of an interconnecting roadway system. Northlake Boulevard, a northwest-southeast trending arterial, will serve as the backbone to the project roadway system. Northlake Boulevard overlays the general alignment of Ridge Route Road near Pinecrest and traverses northerly for a distance of approximately one mile before branching east and running along the Grasshopper Canyon alignment, parallel to Ridge Route Road. Secondary streets form off of Northlake Boulevard.

Project Utilities and Infrastructure

The project site is predominately unimproved and has limited utility service connections. However, a number of utility infrastructures that occur on-site, including natural gas lines, communication lines, electrical transmission lines, and water tanks/main lines, are in place to serve surrounding development and provide regional service. The project will involve the establishment of the necessary trunk lines and connections to provide water, sewer, gas, electric, cable, and telephone service to the proposed development. In addition, several existing on-site utility easements will be relocated to allow for site grading. Specifically, two oil pipelines and communication lines located generally in the eastern ridge of Grasshopper Canyon will be relocated approximately 1500-2000 feet easterly. An existing gas line located near the Ridge Route Road alignment will be relocated under the new Northlake Boulevard. Existing Edison transmission lines along the western ridge of Grasshopper Canyon will be raised and the horizontal alignment shifted as necessary to facilitate an efficient site plan layout.

The 1992 EIR contemplated that potable water would be obtained from the Newhall County Water District. The project proponent has notified Los Angeles County of its intent to request a water service district boundary re-organization from the Los Angeles Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to allow the project's potable water infrastructure to be connected to the regional facilities of the Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 36. Therefore, this EIR will analyze this proposal in addition to providing water supply assessment from the current supplier, the Newhall County Water District.

ENTITLEMENT REQUIREMENTS AND DISCRETIONARY APPROVALS

The proposed project will require, but may not be limited to, the approvals and entitlements as indicated in Table 3. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for implementing the specific design that is being proposed by the Phase One development within the SP boundary. A separate CUP is required for the mass grading occurring outside of the SP boundary. The County also requires a Specific Plan Amendment to address integration of alternative recreational components other than a golf course. Furthermore, the County also requires an amendment to the existing Development Agreement (DA) to adjust provisions of the current DA.

TABLE 3 – ANTICIPATE ENTITLEMENT APPROVALS AND REQUIREMENTS

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Approval Required</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
☞County of Los Angeles	①Conditional Use Permit	For Site Plan review as required by Specific Plan
	②Specific Plan Amendment	Modify recreation amenities as alternative to Golf Course
	③Amendment to Development Agreement.	As necessary to reflect phasing and development provisions
	④Tentative Tract Map No. 51852	To obtain subdivision approval
☞U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	⑤Section 404(b)(1) Permit	To authorize impacts to "waters of the U.S." due to construction activities
☞U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	⑥Section 7 Consultation	To authorize initiation of construction activities clear of FESA issues
☞CA Department of Fish and Game	⑦Section 1603 Permit	To authorize impacts to wetlands due to construction activities
☞Regional Water Quality Control Board	⑧Section 401 Certification	To certify that the 404(b) permit is adequate for Regional Board purposes
☞California Department of Transportation	⑨Encroachment Permit(s)	To authorize encroachment into state right-of-ways for construction activities and/or fuel modification management
☞Local Agency Formation Commission	⑩Service Agency Annexation	To authorize annexation to the Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 36 and the County Sanitation District No. 32
☞CA Public Utilities Commission	⑪Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity and/or Exemption	To authorize the realignment of the natural gas, oil pipeline, telecommunications and electrical transmission line routes

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TO BE ANALYZED IN EIR

In consideration of a previous Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified with the Specific Plan adoption in 1992, the County of Los Angeles has prepared an Initial Study (IS) and determined that a Supplemental EIR is required for the proposed project. Table 4 summarizes the factors that have been determined through the IS to be analyzed in the EIR.

SCOPING MEETING

To assist in local participation in the EIR process, a Scoping Meeting will be held to present the proposed project and to solicit suggestions from the public and responsible agencies on the content of the Draft EIR. This meeting will be held in the Boardroom of the Castaic Union School District Office, 28131 Livingston Ave., Valencia, California on Thursday, September 9, 2004 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION REVIEW AND COMMENTS

The review period for the Notice of Preparation will be from **August 16 to September 14, 2004**. Copies of the NOP are available for review at Canyon Country Library located at 18601 Soledad Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91351; Valencia County Library at 23743 West Valencia Boulevard, Santa Clarita, CA 91355; Newhall County Library at 22704 West 9th Street, Santa Clarita, CA 91321, and the Department of Regional Planning at the address below. The Department of Regional Planning website <http://planning.co.la.ca.us/> will also have the NOP materials under the "Case Materials, Tract Map No. 51852." The County of Los Angeles is soliciting input based on your views and opinions concerning the scope of the EIR for the proposed project. To facilitate your review, the following materials are attached:

- ⌚ Los Angeles County Initial Study
- ⌚ Regional Location Map
- ⌚ Local Vicinity Map
- ⌚ Northlake Specific Plan Land Use Map (1992) and Current Phase One Land Use Plan
- ⌚ Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. 51852
- ⌚ 500-foot Radius Land Use Map

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than **September 23, 2004**. In your written response, please include the name of a contact person in your agency. Please direct all written comments to the following address:

Dr. Hsiao-ching Chen, AICP
Impact Analysis Section
Los Angeles County, Department of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple Street, Room 1348
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Telephone: (213) 974-6461
Fax: (213) 626-0434

TABLE 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

Checklist Issue	Specific Plan Level Update	Phase One Development and Tract Map Project-Specific Analysis
HAZARDS		
Geotechnical	No additional analysis anticipated.	Project specific analysis of geotechnical hazards, soils and landslides
Flood	No additional analysis anticipated.	Drainage plan and infrastructure; alteration of drainage course
Fire	No additional analysis anticipated.	Project specific assessment of high fire hazard area; water availability; emergency/fire access; fire station, project phasing
Noise	Change in ambient conditions; change in sensitive receptors	Construction-related noise; built project noise
RESOURCES		
Water Quality	Change in wastewater treatment strategy; change in receiving capacity; cumulative impacts	Construction-related water quality; built project water quality; NPDES compliance
Air Quality	Change in ambient conditions; change in sensitive receptors; cumulative	Construction-related air quality; built project air quality; vehicle related pollution
Biological	Update biological information within Specific Plan area	Project-level biological assessment; wildlife corridors; sensitive habitats and species
Cultural	Change in cultural/archaeological conditions	No additional analysis anticipated.
Mineral	No additional analysis anticipated.	No additional analysis anticipated.
Agricultural	No additional analysis anticipated.	No additional analysis anticipated.
Visual	No additional analysis anticipated.	Project specific viewshed assessment
SERVICES		
Traffic/Access	Change in ambient conditions; cumulative impacts	Project specific traffic assessment; project phasing; project access
Sewer	No additional analysis anticipated.	Project specific sewage system assessment
Education	Change in school district conditions; cumulative impacts	Project phasing
Fire/Sheriff	No additional analysis anticipated.	See fire hazard
Utility/Other	Update water supply information; analysis of alternative local water service agency	Construction-related and built project water supply
OTHER ISSUES		
General	No additional analysis anticipated.	No additional analysis anticipated.
Environmental Safety	Change in ambient conditions (sensitive receptors, high voltage power lines)	Effect on adjacent development
Land Use	Relationship of recreational amenities	Specific Plan consistency analysis; built project land use compatibility; tract map/site plan design
Population/Housing/ Employment/Recreation	No additional analysis anticipated.	built project recreational facilities assessment
Mandatory Findings	Cumulative conditions for water quality, air quality, traffic and educational services	No additional analysis anticipated.